

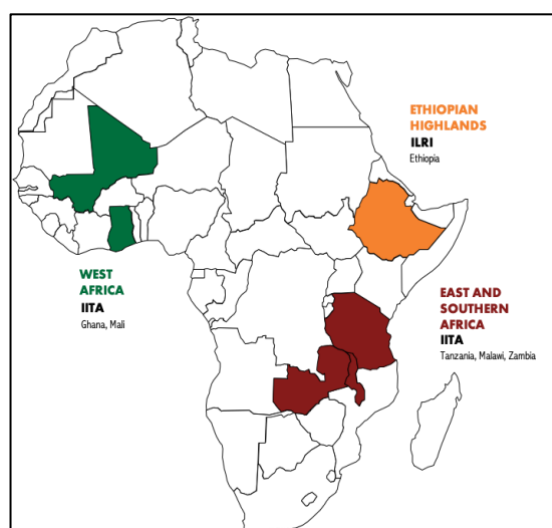
Africa RISING Program Overview

Background

The Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three regional research-in-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the US Government's Feed the Future initiative. Inaugurated in late 2011, and currently in its second phase (since September 2016), the purpose of Africa RISING is to provide pathways out of hunger and poverty for smallholder farm families through sustainably intensified farming systems that sufficiently improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are:

- Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project (Sustainable intensification of cereal–legume–livestock integrated farming systems in East and Southern Africa). Implemented in Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).
- Africa RISING Ethiopian Highlands Project (Sustainable intensification of crop–livestock systems to improve food security and farm income diversification in the Ethiopian highlands). Led by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).
- Africa RISING West Africa Project (Sustainable Intensification of Key Farming Systems in the Guinea-Sudano Sahelian Zone of West Africa). Implemented in Ghana and Mali, led IITA.



Africa RISING program countries.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is responsible for data management, evaluation, and impact assessment across all three projects. The program's focus is on sustainable intensification (SI) of production from small-scale, crop–livestock farming systems, through integrated multidisciplinary research to deliver a basket of technological innovations that will be disseminated to farmers through complementary development partnerships.

The demand-driven research ensures that the program's outputs are ultimately scaled to receptive and informed beneficiary households. Implementing partners are drawn from international and national agricultural research and extension systems, development organizations, farmers, community-based organizations, and input/ output dealers. Guided by the farming systems, national priorities, and the household typologies identified during Phase 1, the program aims to scale Africa RISING innovations to at least 1.1 million households by 2021. The evidence base generated through this widespread dissemination will help catalyze further partnerships that will put the promising technologies and integrated interventions into the hands of millions of rural people in Africa.

Program coordination

The Africa RISING program has no management entity for centralized decision-making. However, its Program Coordination Team (PCT) ensures a common understanding of SI and its potential contribution to FTF goals across the three projects. The PCT also helps to identify opportunities for experience sharing and cross-project support, both informally and through an annual program learning event.

In addition to the PCT, the program also comprises of different other groups that play a part in designing, initiating and managing the long-term research-for-development agenda down to the project level. See figure below.

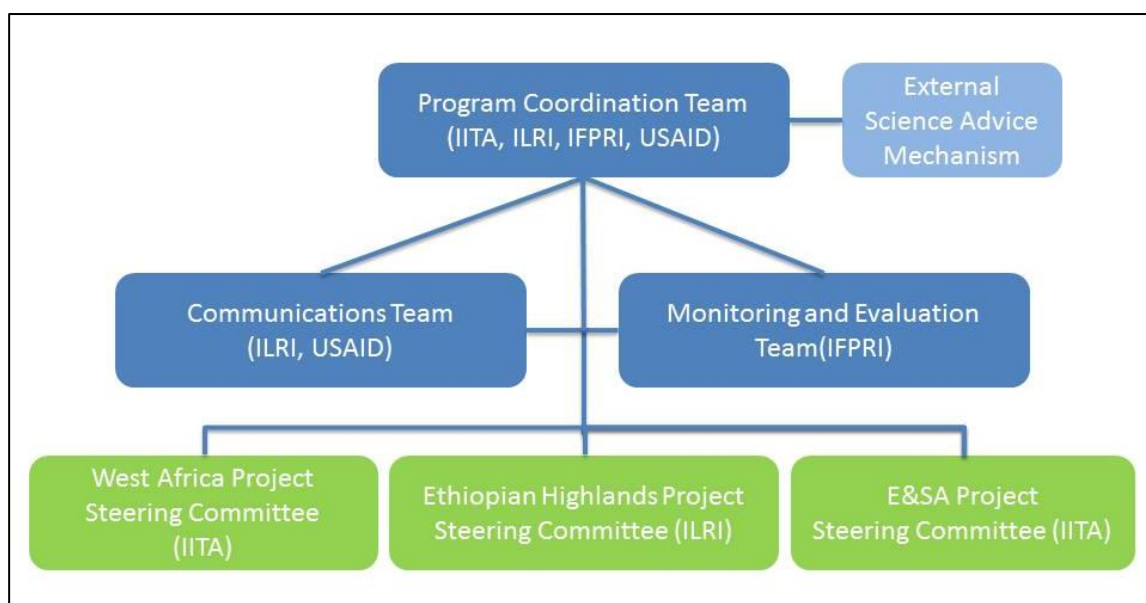


Figure 1: Africa RISING Program Management Structure.

Program-level scientific advice was meant to be provided by an external Science Advisory Group comprising experts with experience relevant to various aspects of SI. This Group was however put on hold in mid-2017 due to uncertainty of funding for the Program and hence the scientific research agenda in the future. The group was eventually discontinued in 2018. Project-level scientific guidance should be provided by the Project Steering Committees. Additional science advice will be sought from external project and program reviewers. In addition, science meetings organized at program- and project-level provide for peer advice.

Program Coordination Team (PCT)

The PCT provides technical and managerial advice and coordination across the three projects. By integrating the three regional projects into one coherent program, each region benefits from the experiences and successes in other regions.

Terms of reference of the PCT

- Provides an interface with the donor for the program and regional projects;
- Tracks project reports, and provides feedback and advice to the individual project management teams;
- Provides support for coordination and integration, but not supervision, across projects;
- Convenes/ sponsors/ approves the research approach design process, including consultation with the qualified external experts of the external science advisory group.;

- Sets standards and guidelines, approves objectives/ outcomes, etc.;
- Facilitates good communications and learning;
- Advises on Communications and M&E teams' work plans;
- Determines the focus of an annual program-wide learning meeting;
- Promotes coordination, alignment, and integration with related research projects;
- Meets annually face-to-face and virtually as required; and
- The Communications Team plays a secretarial role and reports on PCT meetings on the program website.

Monitoring and Evaluation Team (MET)

The Monitoring and Evaluation Team coordinates across the three projects and has a separate budget for data management, M&E activities, and M&E reporting to the donor.

Terms of reference of the MET:

- Ensures the conduct of baseline and follow-up surveys;
- Conducts modelling for forward-looking impact projections, impact assessment, and intensification-pathway analysis;
- Provides ongoing data management and analysis;
- Provides and maintains an open-access data management and analysis platform;
- Provides monitoring reports and projections;
- Coordinates multi-scale M&E activities (program, project, country, and sub-system levels) and reporting to donor, including compliance with FTF M&E requirements;
- Supports data management and reporting for semi-annual project reports;
- Provides analysis and research on the effects of the program at various scales;
- Supports PCT, project coordinators, research teams, and the donor in data analysis; and
- Keeps the PCT, Communications Team, and project steering committees informed of activities.

Composition of the MET

- Led by IFPRI, through staff based in Washington DC;
- Three regional M&E officers (Ethiopian highlands, East and Southern Africa; and
- Two country M&E officers in West Africa (Ghana and Mali).

Communications Team (CT)

The Communications Team facilitates, on demand, program meetings and communications, leads on public awareness, and hosts, populates and maintains the program website, collaborative workspaces, and related communication platforms.

Terms of reference of the CT

- Leads public relations and outward facing communications;
- Provides a coordinated and consistent communications approach/ strategy across the three projects and publicly on behalf of the program;
- Manages program website and collaborative spaces with document repository and associated platforms;
- Produces program communication products for different audiences;
- Builds and maintains productive relationships with USAID FTF and other related communication initiatives;
- Ensures, as far as possible, that outputs from the program are documented, published and made widely accessible;

- Ensures compatibility with USAID and CGIAR communications guidance and establishes consistent branding for the program and projects;
- Supports the PCT and the annual program learning event (and other cross-project learning as demanded);
- On demand, provides facilitation services for all program and major project meetings;
- Draws in communications expertise from partners;
- Promotes the effective use of knowledge, communication, and ICTs within the projects;
- Provides email/ hard copy communication when required for program and project partners without adequate web access; and
- Facilitates peer-to-peer learning.

The communications effort is led by the Program Communication and Knowledge Sharing Coordinator with support from centre communications teams.

Project steering committees (PSCs)

At regional project level, project steering committees provide advice and oversight of research, budget, work plan, M&E and communications, ensuring that each project conforms to program objectives and core principles defined in the research document. CGIAR representatives will be appointed by the chairs, advised by the Project Coordinator/ Manager.

Terms of reference of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)

- Provides advice on and oversight of project activities;
- Provides science guidance to project implementers to ensure conformity with core program principles and objectives;
- Guides project planning and activities;
- Approves project work plans and budget;
- Liaises with MET to oversee project-level M&E, keeping PCT informed on all reporting;
- Keeps PCT informed of activities via the Project Coordinator/ Manager;
- Reviews and makes suggestions to Project Coordinator/ Manager on semi-annual technical progress reports to USAID; and
- Decisions of the PSCs are made by consensus during an annual meeting in person and occasionally as called by the chair.

Composition of PSCs

- West Africa
 - Chair: IITA
 - Project Manager, serves as secretary
 - Project Chief Scientist
 - Project M&E lead
 - Project communications lead
 - Research partners: CGIAR, CORAF, NARS, AGRA
- Ethiopian highlands
 - Chair: ILRI
 - Project Coordinator
 - Chief Scientist
 - Project M&E lead
 - Project communications lead, serves as secretary
 - Research partners: CGIAR, NARS, and others as designated;
 - Development partners such as Agricultural Transformation Agency,

- representatives from regional and federal extension offices
- East and Southern Africa
 - Chair: IITA
 - Project Manager, serves as secretary
 - Project Chief Scientist
 - Research partners: CGIAR, sub-regional research organizations (ASARECA/SADC/CCARDESA), NARS, and others as designated
 - Project M&E lead
 - Project communications lead